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United States CDC Director Walensky visits Hawai'i

HONOLULU, HI – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky was in Hawai'i this week discussing CDC's investments in the state, the future of public health, the challenges facing public health in the state and the importance of health equity.

In August, Dr. Walensky announced her plan to move CDC and public health forward following the COVID-19 pandemic and acknowledging the frailty of public health before the pandemic.

As part of CDC's work to strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure, it awarded the Hawai'i State Department of Health \$14.19 million from its [Public Health Infrastructure Grant Program](#), with an emphasis on rural and underrepresented populations. These investments will be used to strengthen the public health workforce and foundational capabilities of the state.

"It is critical that every community and every state has a strong infrastructure for public health," said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH. "During my time visiting Hawai'i I have seen innovative ways in which the state is looking to equitably protect the health of its people. We must continue to prioritize these programs and efforts, for a strong and more prepared public health system of the future."

While in Hawai'i, Dr. Walensky met with Governor Josh Green, M.D., as well as the director of the health department, Dr. Kenneth S. Fink.

Meeting with Dr. Walensky today provided us a unique opportunity to discuss Hawai'i's approach to the pandemic, which resulted in the nation's lowest mortality rate, as well as a chance to express our desire to provide more equitable access to health services for our rural residents during crises," said Gov. Green. "It was also an opportunity to thank her for her extraordinary leadership during the pandemic."

"We are honored to have Dr. Walensky visit with us and emphasize the importance of investing in public health to keep our communities safe and healthy," said Dr. Fink. "CDC's support and partnership has been and continues to be invaluable."

Dr. Walensky was also able to hear from CDC grant recipients working on programs including chronic health prevention, HIV/AIDS, immunizations, respiratory diseases, and overdose prevention. She was also briefed by health department staff on health issues affecting the Native Hawaiian population and other Pacific Island communities.

Dr. Walensky also visited University of Hawai'i facilities, including the UH Cancer Center and the John A. Burns School of Medicine, where she spoke to medical and public health students and staff about importance of pursuing a career in healthcare.

For more information about the CDC, please visit: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

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